

### **3.0 THE GENERAL PLAN CONCEPT**

This chapter describes the major ideas and proposals implicit in the objectives contained in each element of the Plan.

#### **3.1 Objective**

The objectives of the General Plan are statements of community values regarding the future growth, development, and quality of life in Shasta County. Inclusion of these objectives in the Plan and the adoption of the Plan by the Board of Supervisors represents a commitment to the use of these objectives to guide future land use and land use-related decisions in Shasta County. The Plan recognizes, however, that community values may change over time in response to events within and outside Shasta County. Accordingly, the Plan incorporates a mechanism for the periodic review, evaluation, and, if appropriate, revision of these objectives. The availability of this opportunity for future revision of the objectives should not weaken the long-term commitment implicit in the Plan objectives.

The objectives of the General Plan were formulated through a broad-based citizen participation effort representative of the wide range of perspectives and interests present in the County at that time. A questionnaire and group discussion of planning issues were used to develop a preliminary statement of objectives which was reviewed by the Countywide Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) and revised in response to comments.

The planning objectives contained in each element of the Plan provide the foundation for the overall concept of the General Plan which is described in this chapter. These objectives also provide the basis for the policies. All of the objectives are closely interrelated and these relationships require that they be applied comprehensively in making planning decisions.

#### **3.2 Description of the Plan Concept**

In a comprehensive view of the objectives, their interrelationships emerge in the form of major ideas or concepts. Many of these concepts can be expressed graphically as well as textually. This section of the Plan describes these major concepts and, where possible, uses maps or graphics to illustrate them. Taken as a whole, these concepts provide an overview of what the Plan is attempting to accomplish and why.

There are five major ideas that provide the conceptual basis of the Plan. These concepts, which are discussed below, are:

- Growth accommodation as the means of preserving the quality of life, especially in rural areas.
- The geographic distribution and timing of growth and its relationship to public services.
- Recognition of the Plan as a decision-making tool requiring periodic review and revision.
- Growth accommodation among a variety of living environments.
- Interjurisdictional approach to planning issues.

## **Growth Accommodation and Quality of Life**

Unquestionably, the most distinguishing characteristic of Shasta County is the quality of life enjoyed by its residents. Many terms are used to describe the nature of this quality of life, including rural living, small town atmosphere, or country lifestyle. The quality of life has and will continue to attract new residents to Shasta County. The irony of this situation is that the very attractiveness of this quality of life, if present trends are allowed to continue, eventually leads to its destruction.

Over time as more persons move to Shasta County seeking its quality of life, potential problems may emerge. These could include ensuring adequate water supplies and wastewater capability for rural homesites, the preservation of resources sufficient to support the agriculture and timber industries as well as safeguard fish and wildlife habitat, the ability of government to fund services adequate to ensure the public safety and welfare, air and noise pollution coupled with energy costs of a low-density land use pattern, and the preservation of the scenic beauty of the County.

There are viable alternatives to present trends. One option would be to strictly regulate land divisions and the amount of new residential construction. In addition to a number of constitutional issues, this approach can contribute to inflated land values, often resulting in severe economic hardships for low and moderate income families and individuals. This approach is not supported by the General Plan.

An alternative strategy is one of growth accommodation which anticipates the needs for the growth of the County during the next twenty years, and systematically provides for a land supply to accommodate this growth. At regular intervals, for example, every five years, additional lands can be added to the inventory as needed to ensure at least a twenty-year developable land supply is always available. The Shasta County General Plan embodies this strategy of growth accommodation.

Growth accommodation in the General Plan is based on three fundamental factors. First, there exists within the County a developable land supply adequate to meet population and economic growth projected for the period 2004 to 2014, but this inventory is not uniformly distributed throughout the County. Second, County government, through the Plan and its implementing regulations, anticipates future growth in those areas of the County where this land supply is or can be made available. Third, both the future population projections and the land inventory will require periodic review and revision over time to keep pace with changing demands. Premises two and three form the basis of other major Plan concepts which are described below. Together, these concepts propose that by matching projected growth with an adequate land supply, growth can be accommodated while preserving the quality of life in Shasta County.

### **Geographic Distribution and Timing of Growth**

Growth may be accommodated and the quality of life may be preserved if County government, through the General Plan and its implementing regulations, directs growth to those areas where the land supply is available.

The geographic growth pattern contained in the General Plan is based on the following factors:

- The historic pattern of growth which has resulted in nearly 90% of the population of the County residing in 2 of the 10 planning areas (South Central Region - 84%; North East Shasta-5.5% based on 1990 and 2000 Census data.
- The location of existing and potential capacity in community water supply and wastewater treatment systems.

- A hierarchy of community organization encompassing urban, town, and rural community centers.
- The location of agricultural, timber, and wildlife habitat resources in the County.

Based on these factors, the General Plan recognizes the primary roles in accommodating new population growth will be assumed by the SCR and Northeast Shasta Planning Areas and their constituent Urban, Town, and Rural Community Centers. Specifically, the Plan programs more than a 20-year land supply in the SCR and Northeast Shasta Planning Areas sufficient to accommodate that portion of the projected 20-year population growth which will give these areas 87% and 7%, respectively of the County's population.

This planning goal provides for a 3% increase over the SCR's current portion of the County's population and anticipates that the majority of the County's economic expansion will likely occur in the urban areas of Shasta Lake City, Anderson, and Redding and that the Rural Community Centers in the SCR will all continue to be served by community water systems. Provision for this potential growth is also designed to ease development pressures on areas of the County which contain agricultural and timber operations.

The goal of 87% of the 20-year land supply in the SCR does not mean that new residents of the County will be forced to live in an urban area. Although some persons may prefer this type of environment, others may not. Therefore, the Plan assumes that the Rural Community Centers in the SCR will provide a significant share of the developable land supply to accommodate persons desiring to live in a rural environment.

The developable land supply programmed for the Northeast Shasta Planning Areas maintains its current approximate percentage of the County's population. This reflects the future wastewater treatment capacities of the area's two town centers, Burney/Johnson Park and Fall River Mills/McArthur, and the constraints placed on land supply by agricultural and timber operations. In the other eight planning areas, the geographic distribution of growth orients the somewhat smaller residential lots around Rural Community Centers and limits development outside of these centers to relatively larger parcels. The intent is to provide rural living opportunities which minimize their inherent conflicts with existing agricultural and timber operations in these areas, recognize the constraints on water supply and wastewater treatment, and the need to provide for wildland fire protection.

In addition to geographic population distribution, the General Plan addresses the timing of growth in two ways. First, it emphasizes the need for periodic monitoring of the dynamics of growth to ensure that a developable land supply systematically anticipates and reflects population growth. Second, equally important is the relationship of growth to increased demand for public services. An important goal of the Plan is to balance each area's projected growth with a level of public services intended to be provided and sustained in a dependable and cost-effective manner consistent with the level of services provided to an area, and the level of services must be consistent with the long-range, as well as its short-range, development potential as provided in the General Plan. The overall thrust of development timing is to achieve a growth pattern which is provided with services in the most cost effective manner.

**The concept of growth accommodation through its strategic distribution and timing to preserve the quality of life is a major concept which permeates the entire Plan.** This concept is best understood when viewed on a Countywide basis. If viewed from the perspective of a particular subarea of the County, growth accommodation may appear to be growth limiting. Such a perception may result from one or more conditions in a specific area, e.g., uncertain groundwater supply, adjacent of resource lands, or poor access, which tend to render an area less suitable for additional growth. Such a perception should not diminish the fundamental objective of the Plan to systematically accommodate and encourage growth in those areas suited for development.

The strategy of growth accommodation will also mean that in some areas of the County, permitted land uses may not match the expectations of property owners. Conversely, in other areas, these expectations may be exceeded. This unevenness is an unfortunate but inevitable consequence of balancing private interests with the public health, safety, and welfare.

### **The Plan is a Decision-making Tool Requiring Periodic Review**

The General Plan is designed to function as an integral part of the day-to-day land use decision-making process by providing a clear-cut policy foundation for all land use regulations and implementation mechanisms, including zoning and subdivision regulations, EIR procedures, and capital improvements programming.

The General Plan encompasses a well-defined time period, which will extend to the year 2025. A key element of the Plan is the provision of a developable land inventory to accommodate the population and economic expansion projected for this period. However, this 20-year time horizon is not permanent nor rigid. The Plan must be continuously monitored to compare population and economic growth projections with the location of and the actual rate at which the developable land inventory is being consumed. The results of this monitoring process will be reported to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors annually. Every five years, the Plan will be comprehensively evaluated and amendments may be proposed, as appropriate. Some of these amendments could address needed changes to the developable land inventory to maintain a 20-year supply. Additional amendments could address other timely modifications to the Plan objectives.

### **Growth Accommodations Among a Variety of Living Environments**

The General Plan provides for three distinct types of communities. They are:

- Urban Centers
- Town Centers
- Rural Community Centers

These communities are shown in Figures PRE-1 and PRE-1A. In addition, the Plan recognizes the rural homesite, which is located outside of a community.

Each type of community center as well as the category of rural homesite reflects a different level of public service availability and natural environmental setting, and, thus, provides a unique and different living environment. The Plan provides for each type of living environment, the characteristics of which are discussed below.

#### **Urban Centers**

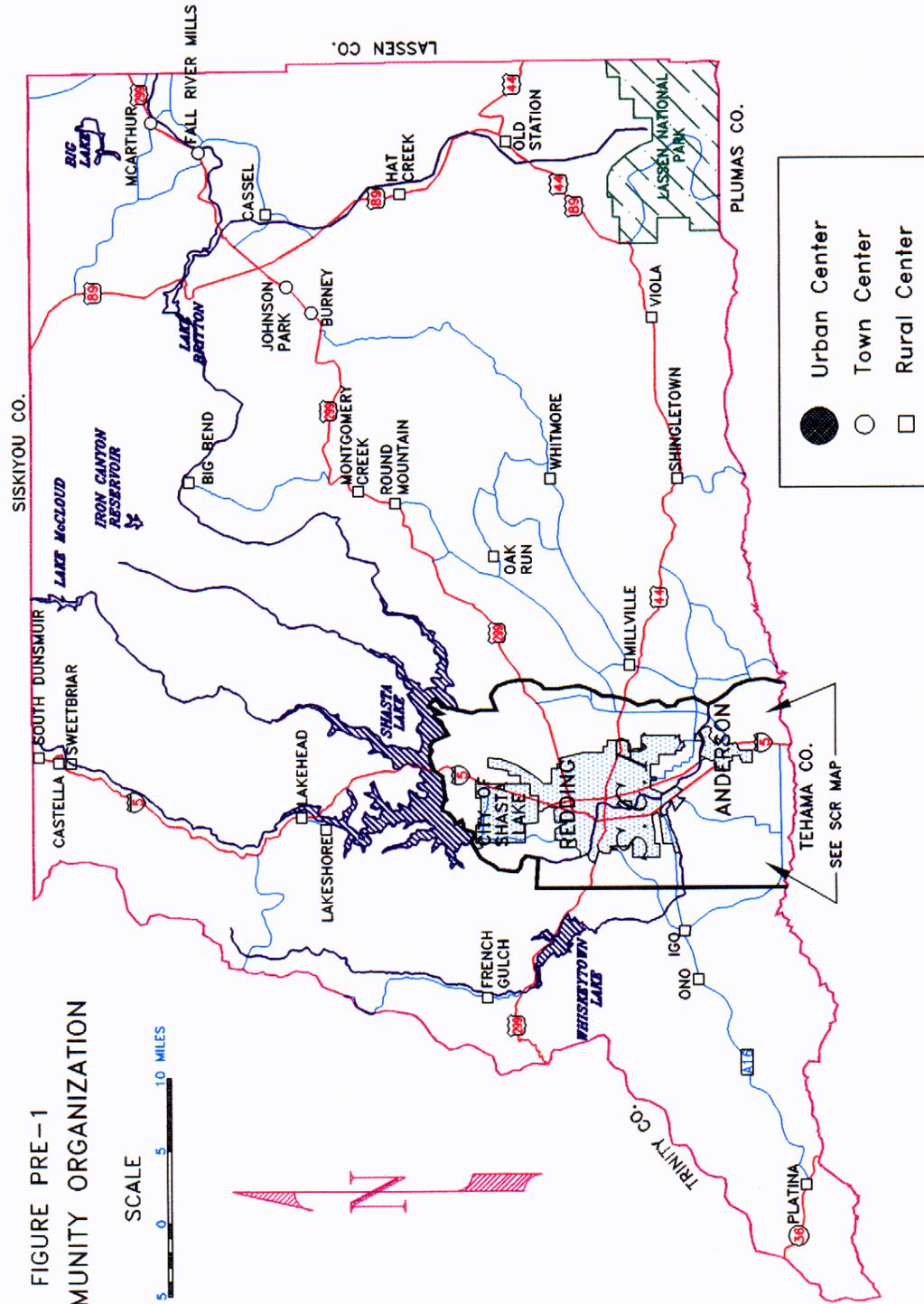
This type of community provides the full range of urban services within the boundaries of an incorporated city. There are three Urban Centers in Shasta County: Anderson, Shasta Lake, and Redding.

The services available within an Urban Center include community water supply and wastewater treatment, full-time police and fire protection, schools, public recreation facilities, emergency services, medical facilities, and cultural activities. The Urban Center functions as a major employment and retail trade center, and contains one or more major destination points in the transportation network.

Within an Urban Center, the man-made environment is the dominant theme. However, certain elements of the natural environment are either visually or physically accessible which add variety and texture to the urban environment. These natural features include views of the surrounding mountains, riparian corridors such as those along the Sacramento River and various creeks, and scenic variations in topography and vegetation.

Residential living opportunities in an Urban Center range from a single-family detached house located on a relatively large lot within a typical suburban neighborhood to an apartment or condominium unit. All urban neighborhoods are typically served by paved streets with curbs, gutters, and sidewalks, underground utilities, street lights, neighborhood public parks, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and existing or potential access to public transit facilities.

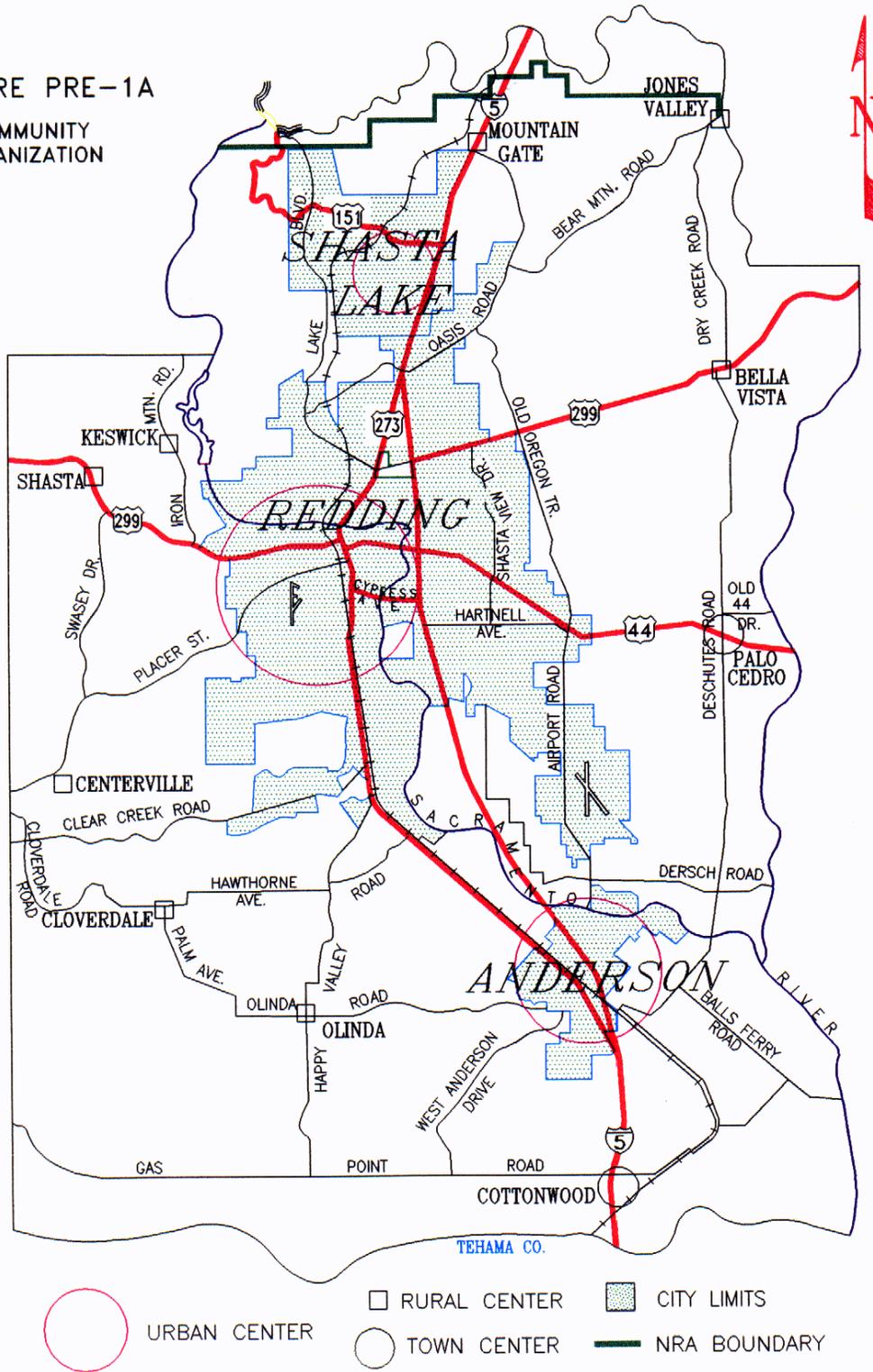
FIGURE PRE-1  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION



General Plan Revision Program: SHASTA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

# SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

**FIGURE PRE-1A**  
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION



## Town Centers

Town Centers share many of the same characteristics of Urban Centers. The primary distinction is that Town Centers are not incorporated areas and usually serve smaller populations than Urban Centers. Shasta County contains four Town Centers: Cottonwood, Palo Cedro, Burney/Johnson Park, and Fall River Mills/McArthur. In future Plan revisions, the General Plan may recognize additional Town Centers.

Cottonwood is situated along the Interstate 5 transportation corridor which also serves Anderson and Redding. Palo Cedro is situated along Highway 44. These transportation ties are also responsible for other spatial relationships among these Town and Urban Centers. In contrast, the Town Centers of Burney/Johnson Park and Fall River Mills/McArthur, located in the northeastern portion of the County along State Route 299E, are Town Centers which are not oriented to an Urban Center.

Public services in Town Centers are generally provided by County government and/or limited purpose special districts. The level of services available in Town Centers is less than that available in Urban Centers, but the specific services which are provided vary among the Town Centers. In general, Town Centers provide community water, wastewater treatment, schools, sheriff, and fire protection. Town Centers are normally secondary employment and retail trade centers.

## Rural Community Centers

The Rural Community Center provides opportunities for persons desiring to live in an environment characterized by few, if any, urban services, a much lower population density than that found in Urban and Town Centers, and close proximity to the surrounding natural environment. Rural Community Centers are characterized by a strong sense of identity, which in many instances, has its origins in the early settlement of Shasta County. There are 25 Rural Community Centers in Shasta County. In future revisions, the General Plan may recognize additional centers.

Shasta County is divided into ten planning areas and, with the exception of the Northwestern Forest area, each contains at least one Rural Community Center, as shown in Table C-1.

<b>TABLE C-1 PLANNING AREAS AND RURAL COMMUNITY CENTERS</b>			
<b>PLANNING AREA</b>	<b>RURAL COMMUNITY CENTER</b>		
<b>Sacramento Canyon</b>	Lakeshore Castella/Sweetbriar	Lakehead South Dunsmuir	
<b>South Central Region</b>	Mountain Gate Happy Valley	Jones Valley Centerville	Bella Vista Shasta/Keswick
<b>Northwest Forest</b>	None		
<b>Big Bend</b>	Round Mountain	Big Bend	Montgomery Creek
<b>Eastern Upland</b>	Millville	Oak Run	Whitmore
<b>Eastern Forest</b>	Viola	Shingletown	
<b>Lassen</b>	Old Station (North and South)		
<b>North East Shasta</b>	Cassel	Hat Creek	
<b>Western Upland</b>	Igo	Ono	Platina
<b>French Gulch</b>	French Gulch		

In most Rural Community Centers, water is typically provided by small public water systems and/or on-site wells or surface diversions and wastewater treatment features use of individual septic tanks. An important exception to this general rule are those Rural Community Centers located in the South Central Region, all or part of which are served by a community water system. The availability of this service permits development at higher residential densities than would otherwise be possible in other Rural Community Centers since it eliminates dependence on uncertain groundwater supplies and the potential for contamination of groundwater by septic systems. This distinction according to the availability of community water service plays a major role in the concept of Countywide distribution of growth.

Other services available within Rural Community Centers include schools, sheriff, and volunteer fire protection. Rural Centers typically provide commercial services to area residents with some centers also providing services to tourists. Commercial uses are frequently mixed with residential and light industrial uses, in contrast to the tendency for physical segregation of different land uses in Town and Urban Centers. Given the size of the communities they serve, Rural Community Centers offer limited employment opportunities.

The natural, as opposed to the man-made environment, is the dominant theme in Rural Community Centers and physical access to the natural environment for living and recreational purposes is an important element of daily life. The surrounding natural environment also provides the resource base for agriculture, timber, and tourism industries which are extremely important to Shasta County's economy. The proximity of private access to these natural resources, some of which also provide the basis for industry, can sometimes result in unavoidable land use conflicts. Increasing the concentration of persons near these resources enhances the potential for such conflicts. Therefore, a major planning objective of the Rural Community Center is to minimize the potential for such conflicts by providing options for relatively small lot, rural residential development within a designated area adjacent to the Rural Community Center. Lower residential densities located on larger parcels are oriented to areas outside the rural communities as part of the effort to reduce rural residential and resource-based land use conflicts.

Residential development is either conventional or manufactured single-family detached housing. Multifamily housing may also be permitted in Rural Community Centers, if compatible with surrounding land uses and consistent with County development standards. As provided by Community Development Element policies, residential lot sizes can range from one acre in centralized mixed use designations to two acres or larger elsewhere. Actual lot sizes will be dependent on the potential use of either on-site water supply, and/or on-site wastewater treatment, or both, and the community's desire to maintain lower population densities. In some Rural Community Centers, developed lots may be less than one acre in size. Rural Community Center development standards recognize the existence of smaller developed lots, but also require the creation of new residential lots to be larger to comply with County development regulations, particularly wastewater treatment standards and to satisfy specific community lifestyle objectives.

Physical design standards can be less demanding than those applicable to Urban and Town Centers. These standards are influenced to a great extent by factors not present in Urban and Town Centers, such as dependence on-site water supply and wastewater treatment, wildland fire protection, and resource and wildlife habitat protection.

### **Rural Homesite**

The rural homesite concept is based on a manner of residential development which features relatively large parcels. Density is often expressed in terms of acres per unit, rather than a minimum lot size as often found in an urban setting and responds to these factors by restricting the density of rural residential development outside of Rural Community Centers to relatively large lots. Density

regulation should not be confused with lot size. The rural homesite concept is predicated on allowing density averaging of the number of dwelling units so that smaller building sites can be achieved while still maintaining a desired overall density. Illustrations of variable lot sizes achieved by density averaging is shown in Figure PRE-2.

Rural homesite alternatives are generally characterized by either conventional or manufactured single-family detached housing. Physical design standards would permit experimentation with alternative technologies in wastewater treatment but, at a minimum, must satisfy County development standards as well as public health and safety objectives.

Rural homesites generally feature public services limited to schools, sheriff, and volunteer fire protection. Commercial services may often not exist or are in limited supply and duration. The influence of the surrounding natural environment is pervasive, and frequently the presence of the man-made environment is often limited to the residence, the electric power lines which serve it, and an access road. Reliance on motor vehicles for basic transportation is very high in these rural areas. In many cases, the rural homesite is bordered by agricultural or timber lands, and/or critical wildlife habitat, thus raising the potential for land use conflicts. Rural homesites are typically located in areas where groundwater supplies are limited, soils constrain the use of septic tanks, and fire hazards are extreme. Some rural homesites are located in areas which can pose serious soil erosion problems upon further development resulting in off-site water quality impacts extending far from the development site.

### **Interjurisdictional Approach to Planning Issues**

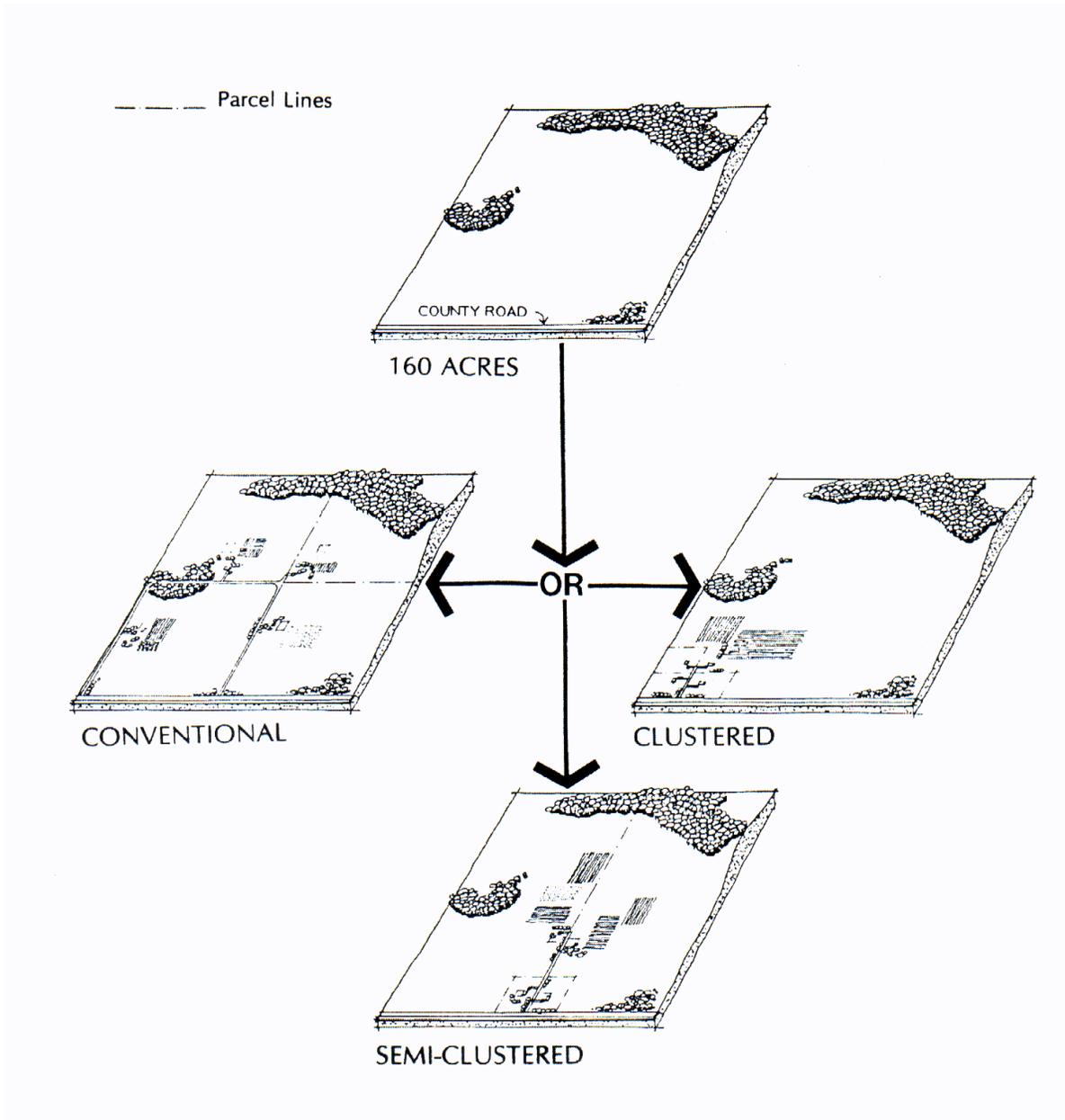
Planning issues do not coincide with the invisible or artificial boundary lines of cities, counties, and special districts. The various aspects of the County's natural and man-made environments are intertwined. Planning aspects such as water supply, wastewater treatment, circulation, air quality, and community development often transcend political subdivisions. Effective, long-term solutions to complex land use problems require sustained cooperation among all affected public agencies. Several reasons support this conclusion.

Implicit in local government land use decisions are certain benefit and cost considerations. These considerations may be measured in monetary terms such as tax revenues or public service expenditures. Independent land use decisions made by a County, City, or special district will generally be influenced by objectives that seek to maximize benefits and minimize costs. Frequently, such an approach can result in simply shifting costs to other governmental entities. A more effective and productive alternative would be one designed to foster a partnership of long-term cooperation employing a comprehensive approach so that all methods of cost reduction are explored and, where feasible, utilized to the mutual benefit of all affected agencies.

Unilateral or independent approaches to planning issues may result in the unintended foreclosure of planning options which could be exercised by another government to the advantage of all. Cooperative planning can avoid this by allowing governments to inform each other of their intentions and jointly develop mutually agreeable plans. Independent approaches to the provision of services to new development can result in the costly duplication and under-utilization of services and the application of different standards for services to areas which may ultimately come under the jurisdiction of another government through annexation. In the latter situation, a change in jurisdiction may require the upgrading of services in existing, developed areas at much higher costs than if the ultimate level of services had been installed initially.

**A major theme of the General Plan, therefore, incorporates and emphasizes the need for interjurisdictional coordination and cooperation in resolving the land use planning issues confronting the Cities of Anderson, Redding, and Shasta Lake; Shasta County; and its many special districts.**

**FIGURE PRE-2**  
**EXAMPLES OF VARIABLE LOT SIZES THROUGH DENSITY AVERAGING**  
**(DENSITY: 1 unit/40 acres)**



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